

# EGYPT



# مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
to the United Nations  
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة  
لدى الأمم المتحدة  
نيويورك

**Statement by H.E. Dr. Pakinam Al Sharkawi  
Deputy Prime Minister & Special Assistant of the President for Political Affairs  
Arab Republic of Egypt  
Before the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

New York, 4 March 2013

Check against delivery

**Madame Chairperson,  
Excellencies Distinguished Heads of Delegations,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me at the outset to convey to you the greetings of the Egyptian women who proudly stood alongside men during the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution, calling for freedom, dignity, democracy, and justice. The Egyptian woman was, and remains, strongly present in the Egyptian revolution. Her heroism inspired the world. She is also effectively contributing to the democratization process, having participated, in record numbers, in all voting processes to strengthen the state institutions, as well as in various popular and political activities, particularly demonstrations, the establishment of political parties, and running for major posts.

The post-revolution democratic Egypt undertakes to preserve the gains women achieved over a long history of struggle and to stand against any attempts to derail the course of their progress. The experience of the revolution has heightened Egyptian women's awareness of the intrinsic value of civilization and of their role and effectiveness. They have started a new path of work to consolidate their rights through religious, cultural and human references and by participating in the nation-building exercise.

The 2012 Constitution of Egypt underlines the rights of women, and stresses that they are full-fledged citizens. It prohibits all forms of oppression and exploitation, and criminalizes any practices that despise or humiliate the human being. It also pays special attention to women who are breadwinners, divorced and widowed.

This new framework enabled the Egyptian woman to gain more political and intellectual independence. She thus stands ready to contribute more effectively in formulating the international discourse on women and in developing visions that are more in tune with the values and culture she shares with millions of women in the Arab and Islamic worlds. This will ultimately support the goal of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to truly embody the world with its diverse races, religions, peoples and cultures.

In this regard, Egypt welcomes the presence of the regional office of UN Women in Cairo and will provide it with all the support it needs to accomplish its work. Cairo also hosts the headquarters of the Arab Women Organization, and has accepted to host the Women offices of both the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The problem of violence against women is one of the major challenges the world faces today. The Egyptian Government attaches great importance to combating all forms of such violence and is currently working on addressing this phenomenon through various measures including: promulgating a law criminalizing all forms of violence against women and girls, and improving security measures.

There remains an urgent need to adopt comprehensive national strategies that address the root causes of this problem, based on an inclusive partnership between state institutions and the society, in various fields such as education, health, cultural discourse, civil society and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy. But most importantly, we must give due attention to the family as it constitutes the most effective tool in successfully ending violence against women.

**Madame Chairperson,**

The formulation of international policies to combat this phenomenon must be based on the balance between the values shared by humanity, and the cultural and social particularities of countries and peoples. The United Nations was built on the respect of this principle.

In this context, Egypt's delegation is keen to develop more effective policies for the advancement of women and the fight against all forms of violence against them. We hope that the Commission will succeed this year in reaching balanced and specific formulations in its final conclusions that take into account the diversity of cultures and beliefs, without attempting to impose concepts or definitions that are not agreed upon and that go beyond the scope of this session.

**Madame Chairperson,**

Egypt attaches great importance to alleviating the growing suffering faced by women in the Arab region, especially by Palestinian and Syrian women. We call on the international community to provide all forms of support to women under occupation and in conflict situations.

In reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of Palestinian women and the possibility of assisting them in the areas of health and education, we once again urge the international community to support the Palestinian women's rights to a decent life.

**Madame Chairperson,**

Finally, I would like to emphasize Egypt's sincere appreciation for the key role played by the United Nations in improving the situation of women worldwide and empowering them.

**Thank you, Madame Chairperson.**